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Greece

By ELIZABETH J. COATSWORTH

1

All day the little asses patter demurely through the vineyards, heavily loaded with baskets of grapes. For them no cymbals clash; they have no part in the bright madness of the Bacchanalia.

2

Instead of the garlands of lovers I shall hang in your porches a hunting spear, sharp arrows, and a bow. Do with them as you will, frosty sister of Diana. I shall not trouble you again.

3

Great beauty can not be wiped out. For even in ruin it remains beautiful, and if utterly destroyed there is still the fragrance of its memory.

4

The young men lounge beside the fountains, and the young girls hesitate to break with the hungry mouths of their amphora the image of the eyes that smile up at them from the water.

5

The nations change and die away; the city alters from generation to generation. But simple and stately the columns of the temple stand at peace with the sky and the mountains and the sea.

6

The cyclamen grow under the small pine trees among the thatches of needles. There the dusty flocks do not disturb them, nor the oxen treading the furrows. Only the young girls, resting from the heat of the sun, love to gather them for their garlands.

7

A jar of honey and a spear,—yours is a memorable memory, O Athens!

Out of the Dark

By PER HALLSTROM

Translated by Charles Wharton Stork

WE had sat in the studio since just after dinner—a couple of us had not had any dinner either—and had talked, talked the whole time.

We liked to talk, we had each and every one of us convictions and opinions so firm that they impressed all the others; yes, even ourselves, as we thought them over. Some had also a share of scepticism, which at suitable moments was still more impressive; and a couple simply kept quiet, which was almost the most impressive of all. To be really deeply silent under wide puffs of cigar smoke, with a broad back against the wall, and a large indolent glance out of wide-open eyes, which during the climax of a speaker are turned away in good-natured boredom—there is surely nothing in this realm of insolvent currency that is sounder and gives one longer credit.

But now we were nearly all talking about nearly everything except politics and religion, for we had come past the years when one takes such things earnestly and had not come to the years when one takes them practically. Furthermore we had all read at least a couple of French novels and so had got over all naiveté. But we touched on the subject of hypnotism, very carefully with a general feeling that “there was something in it.” Literature we gripped by the throat and said rough things to her face, thrusting at her a word sharp as a needle, the word “style.” That was

what she lacked, style. It is a splendid word, this; one can hide as much or as little as one will behind it, and as an accusation it is almost instantly condemnatory. And so we talked about pictures and busts and verse, of synthesis and analysis, of symbolism and realism. We were all idealists and wrapped ourselves in the very newest imperial robes with genuine spangles of brass.

I don't know exactly what we were driving at, the utterances were so varied, but it came out clearly from the total that we had the deuce knows what resources within us and were some day going to shake new artistic tendencies out of our sleeves as easily as the trick man does rabbits. Among some of us there was a general flair for the joy of living, which was taken up most seriously and discussed—a bit tediously—as a settled duty; how one should attain to it was left to one's own free discretion, and it was assumed that he who went to sleep over “Hans Alienus” had a satisfactory private reason for his conduct and might take up gymnastics instead.

But above everything we were zealous for “the new;” we held our fingers on the pulse of the time with the solemnity of one who had universal pills to sell, and were only afraid that others would get ahead of us in guessing its complaints, or that these would change, since everything progresses so fast now.

Leo had then walked about a while, taken an oblique stand where he cut

diagonals across the room, and snapped his fingers at every aesthetic dogma that had ever been devised—lively, indefatigable Leo, with his sharp, somewhat affected painter's glance from behind his glasses, and his handsome, exalted countenance as of a patentee of ideas; Leo, who talked the most of all and made the greatest effect.

"Oh, the devil take it!" he had cried—his accent was half that of a Parisian and half that of a mountaineer—"I've a pain in the head. I beg leave to take the air a bit."

A moment later the door had slammed and one might as well have tried to catch the shadow of a bird as get hold of him. Also, no one else cared to go, since it was snowing outside, and furthermore the day was so gray, so strikingly empty and melancholy; the sort of day that stares at one searchingly, haunting one like a question to which one can find no answer. But Leo went out in all weathers, distance had no meaning to him; he walked so fast that the cold could not bite through his thin overcoat, and besides he swore himself warm at it, fighting it as if it was a personal enemy and keeping his brain ready to note, every beautiful composition of lines that he passed.

We knew that in a short while he might be back with us again after he had hurried almost around the city, his headache gone and his buoyant figure full of nervous energy, with fresh air in his clothes, his glasses damp with cold, and a new theory of chiaroscuro in his head. We therefore continued meanwhile to discuss along the same line as before. The question rose of what the soul of a masterpiece consisted, to what degree it should be manifest, and what share emotion should play. We

agreed that the artist's feeling should be suppressed and only reveal its immeasurable power in lines of form; otherwise it might destroy the proper effect, and a tendency toward declamation could not be tolerated under any condition. We said a number of very telling things, but nevertheless felt a bit weary, either from the yellow lamplight or because the air was a trifle close.

Thereupon we heard Leo talking outside the front-door. He had someone with him, then. But whom, since we were all here? We turned inquisitively in the direction of the door. It opened, and over the threshold stepped a little, dark figure with an ugly black hat on her head, a summer hat whose brim was bent with age and cast a grotesque shadow on the wall. She was a little girl, but what sort of girl?

A strange girl, to be sure. Without hesitating a moment and before anyone said anything, she came into the middle of the room, stood still and looked about her with a reposeful movement of the head, her hands in the pockets of her cape, her whole slender figure wonderfully composed and firm, her motion somewhat like a figure in a dream, when one all the while thinks. Just so, that's what she ought to do,—and yet one feels with mysterious uneasiness that every gesture has meaning, every step hides the significance of coming events.

While she stood there close to the hanging lamp, which threw a sharp, dark shadow across her face, Leo explained hurriedly: "I met her by the street-car line. She was walking and staring up at the snow just as you see her, with her head thrown back, walking slowly in all the cold. I saw she was pretty with a well-formed head and

wanted to find out who she was. She wasn't at all afraid to come along."

"Take off your hat," he added eagerly; "I haven't had a good look at you yet."

She took off her hat, went toward the door, and laid it with her cape on a chair, always with the same remarkable composure of movement. Then she came forward to the light again, and now we could see her face clearly.

It was pale and narrow, but not small in proportion to her figure. The chin was strong, projecting, especially as she held her head very high, and her profile ran into it prettily from the rounded cranium. The nose was straight, the lips straight and pale, the contour of the cheek uncommonly severe and beautiful, the eyebrows a little sunk towards the middle; and the eyes, partly shut against the light, looked steadily and calmly out from under short, dark lashes. Her hair, too, was dark. It was hard to tell the color of the eyes, which seemed to shift from the suggestion of gray that violets have at twilight to the glimmer of the darkest lake. Also their size must have been more variable than usual, for according to the thought that burned in them they widened with distended pupils, or closed around the steel blades of her glance; the muscles around them were indicated under the skin with uncommon sharpness.

Her figure was slim and childish, that of a city girl of fifteen; the neck slender and supple. Every expression of the face was childish, too, but her general appearance bore the stamp of firmness, of set character, which comes from living life all the way through.

She looked at us without letting her glance rest on anyone, looked beyond us at the studies on the wall, pausing a

little longer there, till at last her gaze met the yellow dials of the clock in the church tower as it stared in through the dark atmosphere framed by the window, and her face caught at it in silent recognition. She sat down a little to one side of us with her thin wrists crossed, her eyes still, reposeful and dark.

We did not know what we should say to her, she was so strange, so different from everything else, as she sat there in her black garments. It was as if the darkness, the unknown darkness outside which hid the future, had taken form and pressed in amongst us, grave and enigmatical.

"What's your name" someone asked. "Cecilia."

The name acted as a stimulus to our imagination. Cecilia, the organ song that rises through the struggling light of the church vaulting, upward, ever upward, strong as if it knew its goal, pure through the clarity of space, freezing under the chill of the stars. But what a strange Cecilia was this! What song did those eyes dream?

"And you go around alone on such an evening, Cecilia! Were you going anywhere?"

"No, nowhere. I like to feel the snow falling on me."

"Were you born here, Cecilia?"

"No, I was born out there—we lived there then." She stared into the distance, with raised eyebrows, and her tone gave us the impression that "out there" was some great, dark teeming city on the other side of the ocean, that it was deep with black memories, painfully intriguing to the thought. "But I've been here a long while," she concluded.

She was so pretty with her reticent, dark manner; and her brief answers

waked a trembling echo within one, like the commonplace but meaningful words in a dream. One could have sat there a long while asking questions at random and could have listened long.

But Leo grew impatient. He burned with zeal to get at his drawing, for that was why he had taken up with the girl, and he was not to be put off. He trusted in his art, did Leo; he was wont to talk of distilling the quintessence out of a physiognomy—and now he wished to do it with this subject. Just a few strokes and he would have it all in a concentrated effect: the tranquility of chin and eyebrows, the falling line of the neck—the girl's whole content should be noted there; but if so there must be no distraction, no emotions and associated thoughts to make one's glance stray.

"Let her alone with your prattle," he said; "she's prettier when she is quiet." And his eyes glanced with restless penetration, as if he was afraid of losing something, while he and the others chose their places.

She sat motionless; the whole proceeding appeared to be entirely indifferent to her, and she continued to hold her wrists crossed and to gaze in front of her without seeing.

But we who did not draw felt that the silence was oppressive. Was not this unfair to her, was it not wrong to keep her there as a mere thing to be measured? Was not every glint of her eye, every ring in her voice worth more than all these lines? Was it not presumptuous to attempt to translate the changing deeps of life into the language of the deaf and dumb? What did she hide in the vault of her brain?—what was this girl that sat there?

The sketchers sweated and screwed

up their eyes to make them sharp. They held up their hands against the light—they seemed to have a harder task than they had realized—and the girl slowly drooped her eyelashes.

With that we broke in, "You're tired perhaps, Cecilia? It's getting on toward bedtime."

"I never sleep at night," she answered. "I haven't done it as long as I can remember."

"But what do you then? Are you up and about?"

"I think," she said, and her eyes grew deep, as if night were there before her—"I lie and think and gaze out into the dark. It's so silent then; sometimes I think that everybody is dead, and I, too. It is so calm, the dark is so weightless and soft and pure."

Her face had grown rigidly earnest; now it suddenly glowed with nervous life, as if a thought had burst into flames within it.

"But sometimes I can hear. There is someone walking in the street, far away; the stones ring under his feet, and he is coming nearer. First I think that there is only one, and I wonder who it can be. I dream that it's for me that he is coming, but I don't get up; I want him to lift me from just where I am, and take me to him without saying a word, and carry me far away. Then my heart begins to throb, and there's a ringing in my ears, and I hear many steps, a whole flood of trampling and dancing which fills the street so completely that I think the house will fall over and be swept away, as when the river breaks up the dirty ice.

"And I'm so glad that I burst out laughing and stuff the blanket into my mouth so as not to be heard. Sometimes I hear myself sing, hear it actual-

ly, and lie and stretch out my arms; and the dark is no longer still, or black, it is like red whirlpools only. And I lie and wait, and know that it's for me they are coming, and that they'll lift me on high and rush forward. And I know how the sky will look: black, with great white lights. And the air will be cold and clear; it will all be as if it were at the bottom of the sea. Everything we pass falls to pieces behind us; there's a sound of broken iron and a roaring and groaning of the earth, but we hasten forward, only forward; we do not turn our heads, we say nothing to each other, only scream with joy, as when it thunders."

Her voice had a shrill and brittle ring, jubilant, but nearer to weeping than laughter. All at once she changed her tone.

"That's the sort of thing I think at night," she said wearily.

"But when do you sleep? You must surely sleep."

She gave a clear, childish laugh.

"All day if I like. Mamma pulls up the curtains of course, but I can keep on lying. Then I can sleep, especially if there's sunshine. One can dream so finely in the sunshine; one can laugh and run, and then it gets so warm, and when one gets up one is so deliciously tired!"

"But after that? Don't you go to school, don't you have any work?"

"Papa wants"—she uttered the first word with a peculiar intonation. "Papa (I don't know whether he is my father," she added indifferently) "wants me to go away; no matter where, he says. I went to school, but they didn't suit me there. Now I'm left in peace. Mamma talks to them when they come after me; she has such a proud way with her, mamma has."

"And what do your parents do?"

She looked up with a scornful dismissal of the subject and made no reply. Suddenly she laughed under her breath.

"Such a funny word!" she said. "It's out of the catechism, isn't it?"

"What word?"

"Parents. Oh, I know it means father and mother," she drawled the words out to a comic length. "Mother is slender," she continued, "but she's beginning to get fat and lace herself. You ought to see her when she's drunk soda water, oh, you just ought to see her! Her teeth aren't as pretty any more either; she envies me mine."

"And what does she want you to be?"

"It's all the same"—her voice was cuttingly hard—"it's all the same, whatever she wants; it's all the same, what she says. I shan't do it anyhow."

It was easy to imagine her home after that; what was worse, it was easy, too, to imagine her future.

She seemed to have tired of being examined now, and turned around to one of the sketchers.

"Why do you paint girls?" she inquired of the corpulent Hans.

"Hm! Because they're pretty."

"Why don't you paint war, or red clouds like those there?" She pointed to a landscape opposite her.

"Because I've never seen a war."

"But red clouds you've seen surely. I've seen much handsomer ones than those; they don't really burn."

It was an impressionistic canvas; darkness creeping along the ground, darkness leaping up to meet one from the fields, and in the midst of the fading red off in the distance a lonely shivering poplar, the one thing that rose above the plain, cutting like a sword against the sky, proudly and tragically. As the

girl looked at it her pupils widened, contracted and widened and trembled; she had understood it at once, and her face became fixed by the sorrow of the picture.

"That's beautiful," she said. "Is it hard to learn to paint?"

"That depends. Can you draw?"

"I can't do anything but play the piano. Mamma taught me that, but I can play better than she does, though we have no piano now."

"Do you sing, then?"

"No, I *can't* sing"—her voice sounded more mournful than at any time before, almost despairing—"I can't sing at all now."

"Probably your voice is changing; you'll have plenty of voice if you've had it before."

"Oh, yes," she replied impatiently; "it isn't the voice I'm thinking of, but I can never sing any more."

She raised her head slowly and regarded us all with a swift, deep strangely searching look.

"What do you do that for?" we asked.

"What are you looking for?"

"I'm looking at your eyes." Her voice was childish, naively frank and so earnest!

"Do you often do so?"

"Yes, among strangers; then I don't look at them any more."

"And how have you found our eyes?"

"About like other peoples." There is none of you that can *see*."

"How do you mean?"

"I can't say any more, but there is no one that sees, really sees straight through you."

"Hm! Maybe not. Have you met any such person?"

"No, never, but I keep on searching."

"And if you should see such a person, what would you do?"

"Just wait, wait for the tide."

"The tide you listen for at night?"

"Yes, for then it will come soon."

"Finish me now," she urged with a look at the sketchers. "Get done with your drawings!" And she sat as before.

But no one could draw in his usual style, no one was satisfied with his beginning. All were seeking for something, expressions changed, flaming with eagerness or drooping with fatigue. It seemed as if their thoughts tried to catch something fluttering, shifting, something that continually fled them.

Under these looks that were concentrated on her, together with the sharp yellow light, she grew dazzled, hypnotized, her mouth became tired, her eyes closed experimentally a couple of times, and then the lashes remained lowered and she went suddenly to sleep like a child, sinking back on the arm of the chair.

All had ceased drawing and had leaned forward with the same thought. What was she, this remarkable girl? Could all this be true?

Here she had come out of the dark, had come silently as the dark itself, enigmatically, disturbing as a dream, impossible to comprehend, impossible to lay hold of. Was she not just a vision,—not sprung from us, oh no, but a vision of the slumbering darkness, the uncertain possibility, the great new chance that might come? But her breathing was audible, light and easy; her lean hands had the marks of the seamstress, her clothes were threadbare—an actual girl, to be sure, with blood such as ours, a developing soul! What would ever become of her, what

would become of her?

As if the question had been put in an audible voice, Jacques took it up, the silent Jacques who was wont to make an epigram out of every conviction and who filed every doubt to the point of a needle. But he now got up to speak, advancing toward the girl with his angular motions like those of a clasp-knife and his pointed head leaning forward.

"What will become of her? What will become of her?" he said; "that's easy to guess."

He bent down toward her, but so as not to overshadow her; his hand followed his words, but with light, caressing movements, as if he were touching an invalid. But on the floor his long shadow stood bowed against hers, and his gestures became pointed, sharp as thrusts, merciless, threatening to the slumberer in black.

"What will become of her—you who can wish but not will, you who wear away your time with comparing and feeling and looking, look here at what will become of her! First her mouth will be transformed—her eyes, too, of course, but there the change won't be permanent all at once; her eyes will go back and forward a long while and kindle and be quenched, but the mouth will retain inflexibly all that is strong enough to force in a wrinkle, to bend a line. The lips will come to shut harder when they are not opened by laughter. Here everything will be constricted together: the weariness of desire, the suffocation of kisses; hate which congeals into loathing, shame that is stifled; and then certitude will encompass them, the certitude that it must be so, that that is the whole.

"The cheek"—he almost touched it as it shone soft and pale in the light—"the

cheek gets more sharply modeled, more set in contour, sinks in a little here, as when a flower petal withers. The forehead,—it will stay the same, only a line straight across, as if an invisible knife had cut into the brain and divided the thoughts; barred in some to pine away up here, and driven the others to wrestle in nakedness and confinement. The hair,—it will grow darker with age and disfiguring attention, it will droop here and lie like a weight. The eyebrows,—you see there is a bend between them, they sink here, which gives a suggestion of nervous sensibility, of vibrating thoughts; but this will become no longer noticeable when she opens her eyes, nothing will be noticeable then but their depth of weariness, their infinity of freezing chill.

"Imagine the color of the whole harder, more vivid; weigh down all that is heavy, make sharp all that is light and delicate, harden all that is strong, banish joy with a cuff and blushes with a sneer, and there you have her, that is what will become of her. Pretty, eh! prettier than now because she'll be even more effective to draw, eh?"

He stood silent a while and looked at her, his shadow trembling. Then he went on:

"That's what she'll come to be, and that, too, is all that such as we have the right to think of. But what she *might* be, ah! what she might be. If someone could take her as she lies there and dreams, take her and carry her far away and lift her on high in his arms. We keep on talking about art here, about what we intend and what the time is dreaming of. If there is anyone that has the same dreams that she has and the strength to will them, if there is anyone who's a man, she is his. And

what might not become of them both!"

He looked about him at us others who sat bending forward, gazing with hypnotized looks at the white gleaming countenance of the girl. At his last words we started half up; it was as if we waited that someone should come, that some one should grip us by the hair and hurl us forward, should lift us to where space was bright around us. Something should come to birth in us, sharp as a steel blade, unbending, unsullied, the blue sword of our will, and life should be created among us, true life with warm soil and the sun that impels to growth. In the heat of the room we felt it already glowing in us by anticipation, cheeks and foreheads were red, a warm current of blood set in, there were white sparks in the eyes, and a shiver trembled along the spine.

Thereupon the girl awoke, as if roused by the clamor of all these thoughts as they beat their wings and struck together. First her eyes stared in fright, and then she laughed.

We all sunk back again.

"I didn't know where I was," she said.

"Oh, you weren't afraid of us, were you?" inquired Jacques. "You saw that there was no one dangerous here."

"Oh no, I surely wasn't afraid?" She laughed more merrily still. "No, there's no one dangerous here. But I must have been asleep a long while. I must go now."

We all offered to go with her, but she looked straight at us.

"Why?" she asked, "is the outside door locked?"

"No, not yet. But the street, the dark, the snow!"

"Oh, only that! But I went out alone. No, no, nobody needs to go along with me. I know my way."

Nobody thought of opposing her, her voice was so remarkably firm; almost scornful, we thought.

We lighted her to the door and saw her small feet step quickly on the yellow lamplight, which grew paler along the tile floor and was broken by the light on the stairway.

When she was half out of sight we called for the last time, "You'll come again, won't you?"

She turned her head. From the ugly old hat her eyes looked out at us, deep and sombre.

"No," she said, "I shan't come again. Why should I?"

She was gone, and we all rushed forward to the window, opened it and leaned out, stretching ourselves over the sill. She had not got down yet. Before us lay the black bulks of the houses, defiantly heavy and motionless to our gaze. Here and there was a faint gleam from a street lamp; one could see some large, loose flakes glide through it. The air was gray, swarmingly alive with darkness, and a little farther out across the roofs the church tower stood with its shining dials against the black horizon.

Then she came out of the house door; we could hear her steps resound up to where we were through the chilly air. We followed the little black, indistinct figure out to the corner, where the lamplight took hold of it and threw it out into tawny, pale relief. With that she was gone, vanished into the blackness, into the snow and night and threatening uncertainty from which she had come.

We fastened the window and sat down. In order to do something we tried to discuss, as we used to, about art and its future. We talked about symbolism and syntheticism, but it all

seemed less worth while now than before, and from time to time a speaker would stop in the midst of his period in order to examine a line in the half-finished portrait of Cecilia, and then give up in despair.

And there was no warmth in the discussion, only dry and ill-tempered sallies that cut now at one man's, now at another's hobby and caused them to bolt off into the inane, where comprehension ceases. Soon we were all silent.

Trio

By MARION STROBEL

This is their meeting-place:
Here where the mellow sun,
And trees, and green green grass
Offer oblivion.

Here, is where Sylvia,
Still as lithe as a reed,
Plants her formal garden,
Tenderly pulls each weed;

Here, as neat as ever,
Harry achieves the trick
Of holding Age as though
It were a swagger-stick;

Even the foolish one
Peter, is blithely sere,
And as an autumn leaf,
Dances when he is here.

Oh they guard well, these three,
The sweet mockery of
Playing with each other
Their tepid game of love:

Sylvia, and Harry,
Peter the foolish one—
Playing with each other
To find oblivion!

Pavane

By DONALD DAVIDSON

There shall be touching of hands
(Only these finger-tips)
Lighter and far more hopeless
Than words at our lips.
They must be blown by the music and strewn by the dance.
Our fervor shall pass like the glint of an old romance.

Figures to tread on the grass
(Let viols be wailing!)
Weaving in, weaving out the pursuit,
The flight, the unveiling,—
Decorous bending of knees and the droop of lashes—
You shall have these, and embraces. The rest is ashes.

Gardens under the moon
(There were none like ours)
Dark and old in remembrance
Gave us haunted bowers
Sprinkled with a dust of magic not known everywhere.
They are blasted too,—and now no gardens are fair.

But peal the tune again!
(Your hand is not gone)
With eternal retreat and return
Let the dance go on.
The vague pretensions of dark shall not make us afraid
To dance, to hope,—and attain not, here in this shade.

The Art of Translation

By PHILLIPS RUSSELL

THE translator is seldom honoured in his own or any other country. The publisher regards him as a kind of necessary evil; the critic exhibits glee in exposing his shortcomings; while the very author he translates is apt to blame him for non-success in the literary market. The competency of the translator is taken for granted; its possession brings him no credit; but let him be discovered in an error, however human, and he is cast to the wolves.

Nevertheless, we who read have a debt of appreciation to pay to the translator, for in his capacity as second fiddle and often without adequate material reward, he spends laborious days in making available for us all that is best in the world's literatures.

To mention but a few examples, Tolstoi, Dostoievski, and other Russian masters would be but imperfectly known in western lands today had it not been for Mrs. Constance Garnett; and Alexander Teixeira de Mattos, recently dead, was indefatigable in making known to English-speaking peoples the works of continental Europeans. In France, to this day, Baudelaire is regarded almost as a brother of Poe, so faithful was he to the spirit and word of the American genius in a series of translations that exerted a tremendous influence upon both the prose and poetry of the period.

Translation, as usually performed, however, is doubtless but little more respect-worthy than journeyman's day labour. It is a matter of dictionary,

lexicon, and hard work. But there is a way of doing it whereby it becomes an art. Translation, done with spirit, loses its piece-work aspect and becomes creative. Translation of this kind is far more exacting than the other, but it seems far less so to the reader. And quite likely it is far less taxing to the translator, in fact, for the tedium of his toil becomes of no more importance to him than to the miner who amid the rubble catches a glimpse of the gold at the bottom of his pan. Creative translation takes its place beside the original on a plane of equal dignity, and though it be ill paid, the translator obtains his reward in his own sense of delight and satisfaction.

And here is one of the distinguishing traits of the great translator: he communicates the infection of his pleasure in the original to the reader; always of course with restraint and with modesty. For the good translator lets his translations do their own talking. He quietly removes whatever screen there may be between you and them, and then tiptoes away, leaving you alone with mighty presences.

Most of this is said with one particular and greatly-to-be-thanked translator in mind: Edward Powys Mathers, editor of those three coruscating little books, "Coloured Stars", "Black Mari-golds", and "The Garden of Bright Waters". In them Mr. Mathers has attempted, and accomplished, one of the most difficult of literary tasks—the rendering of the love lyrics of the East

into faithful English. It would scarcely be accurate to call his work translation. In fact, he himself remarks that his rendering of the Fifty Stanzas of Chauras is to be considered as an "interpretation" rather than a translation.

But Mr. Mathers's method is more than interpretation, even. It amounts to transmutation, whereby Oriental structure and rhythm is metamorphosed into a form and mode of expression that the Western mind can grasp without losing the essential flavour and meaning of the originals.

Anyone who has even cursorily examined Oriental writings is at once struck with the difference between Eastern and Western modes of thought and methods of expressing that thought. It is significant that whereas Western books are written and printed so as to read from left to right, Oriental manuscripts run from right to left, or just the reverse. There is a difference not only in result, then, but in starting point.

It is one of the curious things about Mr. Mathers's work that he successfully gives us both ancient and modern Eastern verse, whether it come from China, Annam, India, Afghanistan, or Arabia, in clear, crisp, modern English without depriving the former of its bouquet-like flavour or permitting the latter to seem shiny or brisk. His selections have no age. They cannot grow old. They are sprinkled with deathless dew.

For example, here is Mr. Mathers's rendering of one of the Chinese poems of J. Wing:

The breakers far to the left at night,
Foreign cannons splintering long ago
Bamboo junks of the two-sword men.
Lines of black slaves
Running up the beach,
To fall exhausted forward.

They carry bar-silver against their
breasts.
It drags them down in this Spanish sea
all night.

And here is another:

The square small garden of my paper
Has turned blue in the night fall,
But my pen works late among the
flowers.

I have written that Li Po, being drunk,
Sought to gather the stars and moon
To scent the bed-chamber of his mis-
tress;
And so was drowned.

And I caught cold yesterday,
Cutting wisteria,
Standing in the dew by the North wall,
For Barbara.

And who was J. Wing? A fat, sly, faintly weary old scribe living under one of the Ming emperors, perhaps. No, says Mr. Mathers in one of his dry little notes: "Mr. Wing is an American-born Chinese and practises the profession of a valet".

In short, a contemporary; and yet there is nothing contemporary about Mr. Wing's verse. It does not date. It just is. And Mr. Mathers perfectly preserves its unaging spirit.

Let us now see how Mr. Mathers treats a much older Chinese offering, one by Li Po himself (705-762)-:

Under the leaves and cool flowers
The wind brought me the sound of a
flute
From far away.
I cut a branch of willow
And answered with a lazy song.

Even at night, when all slept,
The birds were listening to a conversa-
tion
In their own language.

Here is all the coolness and detachment, the tranquility, tinged with melancholy, of the Chinese philosopher-poets in limpid English clear as spring water. Given into such hands, we enjoy a new sensation of respect for the

English language. It is a better instrument than we thought. The heaven-born singer can do what he likes with it. It can be stripped bare until it runs like a thin and shining brook; it will take and hold colour; or it can be laden with rich spices and delicate perfumes. It will even reproduce the ornaments and eloquence and repetition of the more passionate East, as Mr. Mathers proves by his translation of "Black Hair" from the Afghan of the half-mad Muham-madji (19th Century):

Last night my kisses drowned in the
softness of black hair
And my kisses like bees went plundering
the softness of black hair.
Last night my hands were thrust in the
mystery of black hair
And my kisses like bees went plundering
the softness of pomegranates
And among the scents of the harvest
above my queen's neck, the harvest
of black hair.

This quotation gives but a faint impression of the gorgeousness of this

Afghan poem, and of the quaintness of the antiphony between the bass of the lover and the soprano of the loved (for she speaks, too); but then there is not space here to quote even a fair measure of the most noteworthy translations of Eastern poetry since Fitzgerald gave the world Omar Khayyam.

Mr. Mathers, it should be said, admits responsibility only for the rendering of his selections, not for their first translation. He freely acknowledges his debt among others to Judith Gautier, to L. Cranmer-Byng, to Adolphe Thalasso, and to John Duncan, the thorny Scotsman who wellnigh lost his soul in Edinburgh but found it again, at least for a time, among the nomadic tribes of Arabia; but still, to Mr. Mathers must go the praise for introducing to this generation so many of the perfect lyrics of the Eastern poets and for putting them into perfect English with perfect taste.

The Finder

By LOUISA BROOKE

"AND where did you stand to take these pictures?" counsel asked the witness.

"I rested my camera," the witness replied, "on the starboard rail amidships——"

My mind leaped swiftly to the finder of that camera. The deck below shook with the heavy tread of hurrying men. The air was full of death. The very paint on the rail blistered in the terrific heat. But in the finder appeared only a vivid scrap of blue, a tiny oil-barge on the opposite side of the slip, hung with two feathers of smoke, one white, one black, microscopic tugs scurrying across the field of vision, human disaster reduced, compressed, belittled—temporality flashed for an instant on the retina of eternity!

Armor

By GRACE FALLOW NORTON

I went, simple creature, to see the High Command;
I went, not knowing the language of the land.
I plucked for his Highness a bright bouquet,
Thinking: All folk speak this way.

When he saw my posy he put his armor on
And seized his heavy shield and his helmet anon!
His heavy shield hurt me more than I can say—
(I went, not knowing the order of the day)

But I leaped and loosed my armor from the air
And laced it on me, agile as a hare,
And when he saw me armed he pulled his visor down—
This, this was the language of the town!

So I pulled my visor down and lifted up my lance,
To be ready, to be ready, to parry or advance.
We were ready—we were ready—and so ridiculous
That I burst out laughing, laughing at us!

I clumped out of doors and bumped against a tree,
Laughing, laughing, madly merrily!
I tumbled, panting, upon the precious grass,
Out where the armored and armed people pass.

When they saw me tumble, as clumsy as a bear,
They marched me off to prison, but *I was not there!*
I had gone away a whistle, I had gone away a bell—
My echoing iron armor was an empty shell,

For what should I do with iron shoe, iron glove?
How could I leap? How could I love?
Leaping, laughing, trembling up the day
And over the noontide I went away,

Far, far off, where laughter keeps a school,
Where I, simple creature, am the dunce and the fool.
But I'll laugh like a wave until I shake the sea,
Never, never more to have armor on me!

A Thursday at Bagatelle

By HENRY DE MONTHERLANT

Translated by Cuthbert Wright

THE plain of Bagatelle: schoolboys playing football. The end of October. After the war.

I, arriving.—It is terrible, my dear Abbé! It is a provocation to the public powers. All this plain in the hands of men in black.

The Abbé.—I don't know by what tacit convention this vast field is delivered, every Thursday * to the exclusive use of Catholic schools. They tell me that the recruitment of ball teams is rather difficult this year in the high-schools. The boys prefer to dance on Thursdays. Perhaps that is the reason why we have the plain to ourselves.

I.—How I love this place! Sometimes when I have been working the whole long morning at my desk, the sudden need of Life takes hold of me, sharply, like anger or thirst. Then, in three minutes, the jolly little tramway from Neuilly transports us, my dog and me, to this vast fresh plain. This corner of the Bois affords unfailingly the minimum of loafing which I need in order not to relax my hold on Life. O Thursday, divine day! Sunday is truly the festival of triumphant *betise*, the stupidest day of the week. But Thursday is the day of youth. If Jesus returned to the earth, it is on a Thursday He would come. I can see Him now, descending in the midst of players. They break off the game and come around Him, touching their caps, not at all astonished. We two (and the dog)

remain a little apart, waiting till He make us a sign, and I murmur to myself: 'After all, it was true.'

The Abbé.—Have you ever doubted it?

I.—Near *them*? You make me think of something a great atheist once said to me: 'It is only before a child that I am sorry not to be able to believe.'

The Abbé.—They emanate Christianity like a perfume, and we, their masters, are penetrated with it. Do you see that boy, so charmingly ill-dressed, with a certain natural *chic*, the *chic* of a child of the rich, neglected by his parents. Five minutes ago he bought some cakes; then making a face, offered them to one of his comrades, saying: 'Oh I do not like that sort. Will you have them . . . ?' And this comrade, understand, was not one of his friends, and it was a lie that he did not like the cakes. Yet there is a boy who is here, only by special favour. Really, he ought to be in detention for having cut out of paper silhouettes of bandits under their soft hats. Save for the grace of God, he might at the present moment be playing the part of his toys in some blackguardly bar. But I am sure that he is nearer than I to Jesus Christ.

I.—He receives more of His Grace, I can believe. It was not by chance that the youngest of the disciples was the one best loved. The choice has a general sense very clear to me.

Charmides also and Lysis were only sixteen. There is nothing astonishing

*In France it is Thursday, and not Saturday, which is the weekly holiday for schools.

in that for those who believe in the divine mission of the Greeks.

The Abbé.—I am not one of them, I confess.

I.—You can admire, at any rate, the coincidence of the two Wisdoms which have remained the common soil of our moral life. One has, in its own terms, proposed the child to us as model; the other has spoken primarily to youths who, in our time, would not yet have passed their entrance examinations.

The Abbé.—You go too far, perhaps, I fear to see you working to produce a new sociological fad—Adolescentism, if you will, or Juvenilism, the rival of feminism, and, in the end, opposed to it—an evil which would engender a conception of the world where a minor could do no wrong, and the soul of a schoolboy of thirteen would be considered the richest jewel of the ages. It is a paradox which would find a secret sympathy in the intellectual anarchy of our time, but which is violently opposed to good sense. Moreover, I know already the formula that you would coldly propose to the priest as educator: that of *creating an emotional crisis* in young boys of thirteen to seventeen confided to him! All that demands, it seems to me, some explanation. And, above all, no tirades!

I.—Very well. I will explain as best I can. A god has prepared this moment. To feel near us the presence of these beings is sufficient to make us think, if not clearly, at any rate, cleanly. I am certain that Socrates would not have had the imperious desire of the truth, if he had not been surrounded by souls whom he loved, that is, whose very existence engendered in him that desire. Like him, we are here in the midst of the Games at some furlongs

from the City, and we do not lack even a new Illisus which sparkles behind those trees. And we have the advantage, unlike Socrates, of not being distracted by the Games, for I might as well tell you, my dear Abbé: your boys are very nice but they play very badly. Are you aware that they have not the first notion of football? However, I pardon them willingly for the sake of those two who talked together a moment ago, during the half, their bare knees plastered with mud. I lent an ear, but could distinguish only one word... 'Virgil'... O my poet, the lime-tree of St. Dié which has flourished nine hundred Mays moves me less than your name, flowering autumn by autumn on the lips of children!

The importance of the adolescent does not seem to me so relative. A contact is lost between him and the unknowable. To the sweet reason of the child succeeds a kind of madness which was justly named *morbus sacer*, words which denote both nature of the malady and also the respect we should accord it. And it is then that what is going to happen is fraught with most gravity for a young man.

Thirteen years! Balzac has written 'forty years,' investing this age with a character having no equal. The age of thirteen seems to me also a thing apart, sharply distinct from twelve and fourteen, and though I do not find this observation in any of the most subtle books of psychology I have read, I persist in believing in its significance. Brief, exquisite year! Seneca said that the full splendour of childhood appears only toward its close, just as apples are never sweeter than just before they decay. At the age of thirteen, childhood

throws its last gleam before dying. It penetrates with its last intuitions the first reflections of adolescence. The intelligence issues from its infancy, without yet being obscured by the vapours of that pathetic life which in a few months is going to begin. Before departing for seven years in the dizziest of fluctuations, the being reposes a moment in a marvelous and touching equilibrium. Never again will the spirit possess a greater suppleness, memory, rapidity to conceive and comprehend. There is nothing one cannot ask of a boy of thirteen. In all the schools, the third form is the class which counts, which contains the most remarkable possibilities. At the end of that year one enters the regular high school course. Something is forever dead. Something else begins.

The sorrowful tension of this period which now commences, this period so sad and yet so unnecessary, so curable,—the multiple misunderstandings brought about by its fatal *gaucherie*, the incapacity for being brief, the efforts without proportion, the harshness and imprudence born of its total impotence, the vain gift of self and the vain candour and the awkward chivalry, unaided, unreturned, and all the false reflections which three thousand years of thought absorbed in ten months can put about the false visages of life... in a single word, there is a virus which invalidates each thought, each sentiment, each gesture of this age. Illusion? Mirage of memory? A defective beacon on the cliff? Possibly, but it lengthens on the water a glistening column. The reflection, not the fire, seems to illuminate the night.

The Ancients have said in other terms: "The vase conserves always the

perfume of the first wine poured into it."

The Abbé.—Allow me one observation. "This period so unnecessary" you have said... But this period is in the order of Nature. Your dog also has had a form of the same malady when young. Each one of us is obliged five years to carry the Nessus' shirt predestined for him.

I.—I am not so sure. Little as the conditions which surround an adolescence vary, the intensity of the crisis is varied by the conditions. Observe the apprentice, the boy of the people, without going farther than the outward appearance which, at this age, reveals so much. He has, together with the gravity of the child, the calm of a man who has already attained his development. None of the self-consciousness, none of the *gaucherie* which marks our collegians. Side by side with them, he has often the air of belonging to a superior race; there is nothing (and this physiological detail has its importance) there is nothing down to the impurity of complexion, so frequent with the ungrateful age in our own class, which is not spared him. The freedom of life, the absence of bad education, the simplicity of the sexual experience, have done all that. Mount a step higher in the social farce,—the son of a small employee who attends the professional school has already assumed something of the acridity of our dear bourgeoisie. Believe me. There is no crisis save that brought about by the misunderstanding between the soul and that unknown world which his fear and his desire disfigure. Bring your child into contact with that world quietly, with all the intelligence, all the intuition possible, and his crisis will disappear like a letter in a mail-box. I

swear to you that my future son will know of suffering only that which will develop him, which I will leave to him as the instrument of his virtue.

And this brings me to one of the reasons which justify me (I am replying to your primary objection). One can never bring too much light to bear upon a soul at that moment when its trouble succeeds in provoking a divorce, beside which that of husband and wife seems normal,—the divorce between a boy and his parents.

Men have spoken to me. They are twenty-five, thirty-five, forty years old. They were fourteen the day when Life lifted the mask. A Gorgon! and they had believed her an Angel! This is how they have always spoken: "Explain to me, if you can, how it is that my father, my mother, who loved me, saw nothing, understood nothing. My silences, my blushes, the tears I was unable to retain, my door closed and locked, my face at an age when the expression changes if one takes only the *resolution* to be better, they have nothing observed, nothing suspected, in the son of their blood living under their roof, they who read novels and went to the theatre! Explain, if you can, this monstrous thing." I have sometimes had the desire to respond: "You say that they loved you. Say rather that they did not love you enough."

If you were able to look down into one of the homes from which you have drawn your day-pupils, you would see the father absorbed in the Stock Exchange, with the *Vie Parisienne* for his leisure; the mother in the cares of mode or the household. At that moment, their son who regards them, lifting his eyes from Caesar and Tacitus, is the only one in that house with a notion

that there exists a civilization of the spirit. Later, for the adolescent, the situation is unchanged, only instead of books open on the table, he has a devouring fire in his heart. For his parents he is a creature unknown; one would say that they harboured an aversion for him. The boy rebuffed on every hand develops his power of silence; silence is one of the conquests of the fourteenth year. Terrible silence of that age, so customary, so universal, that when you see a man and a boy side by side, who never address a word to each other, you have no need to ask if they are father and son. O those mournful Sunday walks, never known by me, but so many times encountered, the father and mother, and lagging far from them, as far as possible, as if the very sight of them repelled him, the son whom they have abandoned! He leads his own life, and from it they are excluded. This is why, in certain schools, I have seen boys in tears at the arrival of the long vacation. They were the same who wept at leaving home when they were ten years old.

Do not say, as you did a moment ago, that all that is "a law of Nature." A cowardly refusal to act, that is how I consider such 'laws.' Whatever I may harbour in the heart, the word 'goodness' is one I never pronounce. One does not love it less for disliking to see it written upon every wall. And nevertheless, whenever I pass before that dispensary on the Avenue de la Motte Picquet with its signboard: "Be good to the young," I think that this goodness alone would suffice, with a little intelligence thrown in, to utterly annihilate your "law of Nature."

One of the schoolboys approaches. The slate-blue jersey flutters like an

oriflamme in the sudden, mysterious wind.

Look at him, that boy! What a miracle, that supreme flower, French, Catholic, Roman! Panting, the blood running rapid under the brown skin, and the shoulders already straight, he is all force and all grace, that is to say, all intelligence and all nobleness. I admire you when you put your hand on his shoulder. For my part, I should not dare to touch him. I respect him, and I am afraid. (*The boy recedes in the distance.*) He smiled, and a soul seem to go out from his smile. It is ancient like our harvests. It has burned on the parapet before the mouths of machine-guns. It has stitched the flèche of cathedrals, inflated the joyous plunderers of towns, sighed in the heart of the old Charlemagne when he made his little plaint on Roncevaux "*Dites-lui que je suis en mult grande peine...*" It is more ancient than that. It was not born with the howling of lions, behind the rail of the arena; nor when the newborn *Enfant* put his hand on the brow of Melchior. It wandered on the lips of the *Hermes* at the hour when Cicero, after a pause, wrote that the Poor Man is the Messenger of God. Crito, the morning of the hemlock, saw it form like an image on the features of the sleeping *Silenus*. O my dear Abbé, that soul in desire of being born is in each of the children of our race; it will appear only when you bring it into being. Yes, a burning bush, that is, the apparition of God. But God burning by experience, environed by suffering, *in the midst of the flames.*

Night has fallen imperceptibly. In the distance, little bluish pools of water burn like bits of broken sky. The odour of damp turf and mud becomes more

acid. The light of sunset makes the landscape heroic. From the clarity of gold to the ruddy tan of brick, all faces carry the colors of flame.

It is night, the grand, fresh night, the night of bodies tired with the ardent weariness of play. Break off the games; tell them it is time to go. (*To himself while the Abbé whistles to the players.*) Have I really spoken? Have I been understood? My heart was calm when I came under the great trees with my dog. It is so long that my lips have been tightened over the immobility of my heart that a little wound has come, a wound that has never healed. And suddenly I have shivered, and my lips have been opened. O my hunger, my thirst, how long, how long? And how clement you are to me, despite all, in the shadows.

The Abbé (returning.)—They have gone to change their clothing.

The soft thunder of drums. Young conscripts from Mount Valérien drilling on the bank of the river.

I.—I see one receding off there in the violet dust rising toward Suresnes. While the rest assemble, he withdraws farther and farther. Alone, drunk with evening, with the anguish of twilight, he chases the ball with all his force, and when he has caught it, sends it rolling ever farther, and ever pursues, as if condemned to a fabulous punishment which prevents him from stopping, as if goaded by a divine insanity. Where is he going? If I were his father, I would pray for him.

The Abbé.—I can no longer see him.

I.—I see two others carrying an iron bar between them. I see their shadows. They walk in step, heavily. They have the air of litter-bearers.

The Abbé says nothing.

I see more out there. Little stains on the landscape. From so far, one would not say that they had souls. I see some who advance under the brush in single file. Why do they bend like that? It is as if they carried knapsacks.

The Abbé (in a low voice.) You, too, then, have thought that...some day... in a few years...?

I.—Of course.

The Abbé.—It is frightful!...frightful!

A pause.

Good-bye, my dear friend.

I.—Good-bye. Don't let them get cold.

In the dusk, as soon as they reach the road, the divisions of schoolboys commence to march in military step.

(Translated with permission of *La Nouvelle Revue Française*.)

The Pine-Wood

By KATHARINE TYNAN

The pine-wood's keeping a heart so chilly
Dark on the glittering blue
In the full Summer of rose and lily
Hers is the dusk and dew.

High in the blue the noon-sun's burning
The sea's glaring, unkind—
Here in the pines is the cool of morning,
Deep shadow and a fresh wind.

Her heart so sold in the blaze of Summer,
Is white fire for she knows
The days are bringing the North wind's rumor
Of icebergs and the snows.

When the world is frozen and life departed
She knows the bliss that will be.
The Snow her lover coming full-hearted
Over the land and sea.

The pine-wood dreams of the Snow, her lover
Dreams—she trembled and sighed—
They shall clasp, they shall kiss, where none discover
Bridegroom and bride.

A Word on Francis Thompson

By BANBURY CROSS

I hang 'mid men my needless head,
And my fruit is dreams, as theirs is
bread:
The goodly men and the sun-hazed
sleeper
Time shall reap, but after the reaper
The world shall glean of me, me the
sleeper.

To see the world in a grain of sand,
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour;

THE man who wrote these lines, "sun-hazed sleeper" though he was, reckoned well in his prophecy. The world has gleaned of him more bountifully perhaps than he looked for, but his reckoning holds; and it is good to see that a man as oblivious as he to the moil of life about him was yet cognizant of his own contribution to the world. Francis Thompson was more than "sun-hazed sleeper", more than mystic, more than poet even, he was child. His is the philosophy of childhood, of innocence. His is the wisdom of the child.

In his essay on Shelley we hear him saying: "Know you what it is to be a child? It is to be something very different from the man of today. It is to have a spirit yet streaming from the waters of baptism; it is to believe in love, to believe in loveliness, to believe in belief; it is to be so little that the elves can reach to whisper in your ear; it is to turn pumpkins into coaches, and mice into horses, lowness into loftiness, and nothing into everything, for each child has its fairy godmother in its own soul; it is to live in a nutshell and to count yourself the king of infinite space; it is

it is to know not as yet that you are under sentence of life, nor petition that it be commuted into death." Completing the period, he says, speaking of Shelley: "To the last in a degree uncommon even among poets, he retained the idiosyncrasy of childhood, expanded and matured without differentiation. To the last he was the enchanted child."

The same might be said and more pertinently of Thompson: To the last he was the enchanted child. Drunk with dreams and the gorgeous symbols they evoked he lived in a world of his own imagining, that world of faëry so precious to wide eyed childhood. "It is to believe in belief." He truly believed in belief, though surrounded on all sides by sceptics and iconoclasts. "It is to turn lowness into loftiness." In the gutters of London he fashioned the loftiest imagery poet has yet bequeathed to a bewildered world. With his fairy godmother in his soul, living in a nutshell or a sewer, what matter, counting himself king of the infinite, turning nothing into everything, he was the tired, soiled, yet illusioned child—gutter waif, if you will, bare feet in its dregs but eyes to the stars, head totty with heaven.

It is hard to speak of Francis Thompson without growing somewhat ecstatic,

arguing of course one is in sympathy. His is the sort of magic that either takes you or misses you. His is the magic of a naïveté glittering with Cinderella splendence. It is the hour of midnight and the spangled horses have again become mice and the silver coach a pumpkin, but he does not see the mice and the pumpkin—the silver coach, the shining coachman, the spangled horses are still there. The absurd child won't have them away. There is no reality but this—the reality of dream, of faëry; the reality of unreality.

One might parry this by saying that Thompson is often sad and disappointed and aware. So he is, but with the sorrow, the disappointment, the awareness of a hurt child that is grieved, vexed, or cognizant of his hurt for the moment, and the moment only. The "Hound of Heaven" singularly illustrates the sanguineness of his nature. There must be something, some compensation for every hurt. The toys taken from the erring waif, tears come into his eyes and the mother arms are there to receive and console.

All which I took from thee I did but take,

Not for thy harms.
But just that thou might'st seek it in
my arms.

All lost, there is yet the mother or father as final solace. The child has transgressed, has strayed away, his toys are gone, his clothes are torn and soiled, he is hungry and tired and heart-sick, but there is refuge

All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have storcd for thee
at home:
Rise, clasp My hand, and come

We scoffers, we solemn little egos, we pompous windy squawking gesturers, we worldly tripe, is there not some shred of young wonder left in us that will respond to such a plea: "Rise, clasp My hand, and come."

Surfeited with the empty babble and tricky innovations of fumbling contemporaries it is with a feeling of keen satisfaction that one reaches over for a volume of Thompson's showing on his shelf along with Villon, Campion, Crashaw, Blake, Heine, Shelley and Verlaine, a valiant choir, and sits back with a sigh of relief, knowing that he will find here at least some leaven for a jaded spirit.

Epigraph

By RICHARD KIRK

Since life's a prey to age, whose ache
Fobs physician's curing,
I scribble with a pen to make
Granite more enduring.

John Doe and the Ghost of Solomon

By BENJAMIN THOM

All things are vanity, Solomon saith.
What, sire, of love, and laughter, and death,
And what of faith?
Vanity presumes a sort of a gesture,
A mode or a mask or a dubious vesture,
While these four things are as definitely real
As a tooth-ache is or an automobile
Or a good stout meal;
As real, by the count, as anything can
Be in the droll experience of man.
He is a knave and a braggart and a fool
Would have Doe believe by a preachment or a rule
That everything here which we see or seem
Is only a dream.
And he is a fool and a braggart and a knave
Would have Doe believe that a grave is but a grave
And love an old illusion and death only death
When the heart ceases beating and the body's out of breath.
What of that death when the heart beats on
And the body breathes and moves but the soul is gone,
King Solomon?
Is this a vanity of vanities, too,
A thing to drown in a bottle of brew?
And what of that love confounds all reason
Won't pass away for a day or a season,
Filches the wits and won't pass away
Not for a reason, a season, or a day—
What of that, say?
And what, say, too, of that grim laughter
Gurgles from the soul a long while after
It has died in the quick body's cell
And gone with all dead souls down to Hell?
What can be the matter with the daft old wraith
Sillily chuckling at the business of death—
Can it lack faith?
Vanity of vanities, Solomon saith.
Now hearken ye to Doe, King Solomon,

You and your disciples, every mother's son,
 Prattling your platitudes as best you can
 To the listening ear and the gaping mouth of man
 And the eye that will scan
 Screeds—screeds that are punched full of holes
 By the pitchfork prongs of poor damned souls—
 Harken ye to Doe: (Ta ra ra boom de ay!)
 He is the wise man knows how to play
 And how to pray;
 Who would be a happy man must have some faith
 And feel in his heart there's a life after death.
 Vanity of vanities, Solomon saith,
 Gasping for breath.

*Every pretty fellow in his own ego
 From great King Solomon to wee John Doe.*

In Exilium

By GUSTAV DAVIDSON

What shall I do, now I have gone forever
 Out of your heart like unremembered rain,
 And all the golden paths of my endeavor
 Are turned into a wilderness of pain.
 Where shall I go, now that I cannot ever
 Walk in the April of your pride again.
 Surely this Spring will break my heart as never
 The granite twilights on the coast of Spain.

Had you been cruel, more cruel than you were tender,
 And flung me back to perish in the snows,
 I would not then have dreamed towards your surrender,—
 Though even the darkness may achieve a rose
 And one soul's chaos flame to greater splendor
 Than sunsets in the archipelagos.

The Bitterness of Gorky

By N. BRYLLION FAGIN

THE world has accepted almost as an axiom that strange notion that Russian literature is intensely pessimistic. The mere mention of the name of a Russian author or the title of a Russian book is frequently sufficient to cast a wary soul into a despondent mood. And yet the notion is but a myth, for no literature on earth is essentially more optimistic than Russian literature, and no writers, surely in modern literature, are quivering with a more optimistic message than the sad Russians.

Manner is not always a safe guide to fundamental motives. The Russian manner has been taken too often for the motive. Because the Russian writers have crept into the veins of life and society and searched in strange tissue for diseases and causes it has been concluded that their outlook upon life and man is morbid and hopeless. That searching itself is a hopeful occupation, although, alas, not always a popular one, has been overlooked. The insipid optimism which precludes search because everything that is good, is the rank-est of pessimism; it denies the principle of growth, of the everlasting urge, of decay and replacement, of Tomorrow. The true optimists, since man began to make history, have been the brave, restless souls that dare to decry and to bless, to break and to build, to hate and to love, to bury ideals that have died and to live with ideals as yet to come. The Russian writers are serious because they think and thinking implies aware-

ness of existence; it is this awareness of the existence we know which imparts to their books an intensity of thought and emotion which is contagious and heartening.

In the works of Maxim Gorky, this profound optimism finds its most characteristic expression. Turgenieff's melancholy people, Dostoyevsky's hectic dispossessed, Tolstoy's searchers for enduring values, Chekhov's defeated, all these in their respective ways march toward a vision, but they are fettered, handicapped, too much obsessed by the sorrows of the past. Gorky's characters, in the main, are what we might self-flatteringly dub as bums, but because they are bums, owing nothing to society except possibly their destitution, they are free to feel and think in the extremely simple and healthy way in which at bottom we all do, when our emotions and thoughts are unmolested by enslaving influences. These characters love plainly and hate frankly; they are coarse and brutal and poetic, as instinct and occasion may dictate; they are blind, and at times they see with an uncanny clairvoyance; and withal they are starkly human. Gorky's preoccupation with these people is in itself a significant characteristic of the buoyant motive of his work. The free common people are the hope of the world. They absorb his unbounded faith. They are the foundation, the support of our social edifice, and what they feel and what they think and what they see is of utmost importance.

Someone or other has occasionally remarked on the similarity between Jack London and Maxim Gorky, but the fallacy of mistaking manner for substance has always been our misfortune. London knew life and men and in his mind there were ideas. He had the power of making his knowledge known, but in his stories there is only a gesture of this knowledge, a stifled sincerity. For there is a distinct and uniform way in which American stories have had to be written and a writer's own ideas have not been part of this way. Jack London fought the inhospitable tradition of a literary mold until his contempt got the better of him, then he surrendered. That was the end of his artistic mission; thenceforward he wrote merely stories and the Gorky in him was crucified. Only an occasional gesture, a lightning flash of his original urge, may be found here and there among his numerous fictions.

Gorky, too, started out with a great contempt in his heart and a bitterness which has never left him, a bitterness which is a boon to the world. It is the contempt that one feels running through the gray little stories of Chekhov, but while there it is a quiet undercurrent in Gorky it rushes forth with a staggering energy. Men have spoiled the values of existence; men have died by convincing themselves that they are good and pious and wise and noble; men have died because their power to create dreams has died, and hence Alexey Pyeshkov's (Gorky's "The Bitter One's") bitterness. It is a rebellion and the call to an awakening.

The large number of stories, plays and articles that Gorky has produced constitute a rich mine of philosophy, so-

ciology, psychology, religion, and, above all, an indefatigable study of men and the world in which we live. To all his tasks Gorky has brought, coupled with his penetration, a great simplicity which lies at the bottom of his sophistication and imparts to his work a solid naturalness, as if he has scraped the complex surface and has felt the firmness of humble reality. But above all has he brought a passion for criticism, scathing yet understanding, withering yet sympathetic. Gorky's work is for the most part frankly *tendenz* literature, of a high-type but literature with a purpose nevertheless. Art purely for art's sake has not found a great adherent in Gorky. Life to him, as it is being lived, is too serious a matter for a writer to spend dabbling in letters merely for the sake of dabbling. The pen is a sword and there is so much to slash and to cut; it is a bugle and there is so much to wake and to herald.

Risen from the depths, Gorky has never forgotten the depths, but while the pessimist cries over the abyss, Gorky storms against the inertia which enables us to pass over it without seeing or heeding the yawning ugliness. There is a varied world in the depths where the process of adjustment and adaptability goes on as it does on the heights. There are those that drink and forget themselves. There are others who hark back to their past, and there are still others who laugh. "You seem always the same" someone tells Captain Kuvalda. "Are you always joking?" And Kuvalda answers: "What else can one do, living among you unfortunate men?" ("Creatures That Once Were Men.") Complacently we walk our avenues, occupied with our own

problems and mighty ideas, content and jealous of our elevated place in life, and sometimes, when we are generously inclined, we pity the poor souls who are down below. But what is the reaction of these poor souls? Do they appreciate our charitable intentions? Certainly not the Russian down-and-outers who have learned their lesson of resignation. "What does 'in my own place' mean?" Kuvalda demands contemptuously. "No one really knows his own place in life, and everyone of us crawls into his harness... Life shuffles us like cards, you see, and it is only accidentally, and only for a time, that we fall into our own places!"

But even in the delineation of these people of the abysmal world there is an ulterior motive in Gorky. Not only does he supply the medium through which the soul of creatures that once were men might gain articulation, but he seeks to establish the supremacy of one fundamental value, the value of man. In our world "With decent looking trousers you can go far," for, in our world, "men... judge everything by the outward appearance, while, owing to their foolishness, the actual reality of things is incomprehensible to them." Only the people in the lower depths, divested of all that makes for outward appearance, are conscious of the dignity of man. Thus when the owner of the doss-house, finding at the door an old man in tatters, shouts, "What are you? Who are you?" the answer comes with startling simplicity: "A man." The doss-house is broken up and the creatures are scattered, but "In the lowering gray clouds which hid the sky, there was something hard and merciless, as if they had gathered together to wash

all the dirt off the face of this unfortunate, suffering earth."

Therein lies the significance of Gorky and of all the writers of his type often so flippantly set aside by the fashionable epithet, "pessimistic." Gorky would not run away from the dirt of this unfortunate, suffering earth. He would wash it off, and if he himself is incapable of doing it he would at least call attention to the existence of this dirt.

It is proper, of late, to demand of a writer that he give us "beauty." No critic is safe in concluding an article or a review without finding beauty, and the readers expect it. Perhaps it is not such a meaningless fad after all. Perhaps we have come to feel keenly the lack of beauty in our cramped actual life and yearn for its glitter in what we read. Perhaps it is the natural romanticism that has always lived in the heart of humanity. But, whatever the cause may be, we are agreed that sordidness is not beautiful, and Gorky surely gives us sordidness. Has he therefore no beauty to contribute, no "golden radiance" to shed?

The answer to this question is important. There is no beauty without a point of view, and points of view are rare; a large number of good people are afraid of them. Then there are those that would not bend their stiff bodies or crane their well-fitted necks to see beauty that is not obvious in their pathway. Beauty which is even slightly submerged or out-of-the-way escapes them. People with hardened faces, with bloated eyes, have no meaning for them, and yet Gorky finds in precisely such people a beauty which links the common heart of the universe. They dream

and they worship; they build their gods and demolish them, and build again. Twenty-six "ugly, dirty and misshapen" men offer stolen kringles to a beautiful little girl with infinitely more devotion than rich parishioners offer their dollars to the house of their God. ("Twenty-six and One.") The people of Gorky's world have their own code of honor, their own need and understanding of brotherhood, and their own dream world of life, for men cannot live without the sentiments that feed the heart. To the woman who has no real lover a phantom lover may bring solace. It is only unfortunate that there are those to whom reality is literal, who laugh at the woman who dictates letters to an imaginary lover and then thrills with ecstasy at the words born of her own starved mind. ("Her Lover.")

It is because Gorky sees so much beauty in the world that he is bitter, for this beauty is covered with dirt and trampled upon. Gorky after all is a romantic, just as most of these realists really are. There is beauty flaming everywhere, in every road, but men

pass by blind or cringing, lest it blight them. It is this cowardice that embitters him just as this cowardice and blindness embittered Chekhov. We neither live beautifully nor die beautifully. "If I were asked to choose between a death by burning or being suffocated in a dirt bog, I should choose the former; it is anyway a more seemly death," Gorky says in "My Fellow Traveler." His free nature revolts against the stagnation of mankind, its fear to let loose, to tramp out unto the open highway, to yield to the call of beauty within us. Perhaps the full strength and import of his bitterness and artistic power is best summarized in his poem of the mermaid, a little *Lorelei* poem, in which a peasant boy, having fallen in love with a beautiful mermaid, throws himself into the sea in search of her, and Gorky ends the tragedy of Marko's death with these significant words addressed to a Philistine world: "And you, like worms you crawl on the face of this earth, and neither stories of you will ever be told nor songs will ever be sung about you!"

Inscribed in the Inn at T'ung-Kuan on an Autumn Trip to the Capital

By HSU HUN

Translated by Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-Hu

While red leaves flutter down the twilight
Past this arbor where I drink,
Cloud-rifts blow toward the Great Flower,
And a shower crosses the Middle Ridge.
I can see trees tinting a distant wall,
I can hear the river reaching the sea
As I the Imperial City tomorrow...
But I dream of woodsmen and fishermen.

Chanson Noir

By ANN HAMILTON

When I am an old woman
Look at me and sing
How once I wore a magic gown
And a charmed ring,
And how I found a moon-flower
Once in the spring.

When I am an old woman
Look at me and say
That one lover held me
Through April and May,
And what was in my soul
When I sent him away?

When I am an old woman
Look at me and know
Why dream-petals waver
When ghost-winds blow,
And why old comets
Are slow.

Portrait of a Girl

By ROBERT J. ROE

She sits square kneed,
Solid, compact and fragrant
As a cedar chest
That holds only things
Meant to keep.

You would not guess
She had a thought
She is so quiet,
Until the opening of decisive lips
Whisks out a dainty thing
And closes with a glimpse
Of heirlooms!

Improper Ganders

By FRITZ OOLONG

WE still have some curious notions in the United States about the "artist." An artist is one who can draw a little, is fond of playing music other than jazz, or one who does not tear up his verses immediately. In truth he is usually what is called less euphemistically a "rotten spoilt child," one who has wept his way out of childhood dilemmas, and arriving at the age when tears no longer are the "open sesame" finds life a sad disappointment. He pours out his crushed heart on paper, generally to the effect that spring is here, but he can dance no more.

Such is the "stuff" that the poet is made of. And he is taken quite seriously. Nay, he is assumed to be a special sort of human being, not answerable to the same laws nor susceptible to the same emotions that rack or restrain his brother who is striving to become a brick layer or a starter of elevators.

This, I think, explains the huge volunteer army of poets and writers in this country. No real genius is required, just a pretty talent, lack of self-control with its attendant egoism sufficient to make the subject eager to spread his petty troubles onto paper. In fact, lately, writers have come to a point where they seem to think if only they are abnormal enough in their personal life and frank enough in their portrayal of it, that they are writing a deathless masterpiece.

We come then to the question of why the critics and the public which receives

literary efforts allows and applauds this sort of thing. The explanation is complicated. There is first the revolt from puritanism which is always crying for raw meat, for the "guts" of things though it really wants something quite different. This cult wants its novels true to life, *i. e.*, full of sexual regularities and irregularities; its poetry must be written with a good admixture of slang, strong language and gutter words. Any writer answering these qualifications is hailed a master. Then there is the Chatterton legend which we do not seem to be able to shake off. We must always conceive of genius as starving in a garret despite the fact that it almost always makes sufficient money to live comfortably and always, of course, forgetting that Chatterton and his ilk are poets by the barest margin. This is the popular idea of genius. Compare the stage versions: an improvident half lunatic creature with long hair, big staring eyes and a predilection for long melancholy speeches on love, spring, the flowers, the birds and so ad nauseam. His artistic output is rarely spoken of. That is taken on faith. Then there are the Freudians who say in effect you cannot have an Achilles without a soft heel; therefore mothers and fathers be careful not to put shoes on young feet lest they lose the opportunity of stone bruises and therefrom greatness.

To this sympathetic public we are, therefore, indebted for books like "Blackguard" by Mr. Bodenheim, which

tries to make heroic, dishonesty; and stuff like "Tramping on Life" by Harry Kemp. Mr. Kemp, who thinks himself a Keats and later, I suppose, a Villon, is quite certain that the love affair he details at great length is worth telling about. He considers it worth even digging up an old scandal of a woman whom he pretends to care for. There are in this autobiography three or four lines where Mr. Kemp tells of himself, the lady in question, and a girl friend, lying nude on a blanket taking a sun bath while one reads aloud Havelock Ellis' "Sex in Relation to Society," Mr. Kemp assures us that nothing improper occurs. I did not need his assurance. This little scene might pass as a symbol of the "Greenwich Village Idea." How long, oh Lord, are we going to take this sort of stuff seriously? Must we Americans always pull solemn faces over such sexual buffoons? Cannot we see that once we get beyond the idealistic lyricism of the sonnets of Michel Angelo the whole sex business becomes in print a farce comedy?

The whole falsity of the situation of the artist soul which struggles for the freedom of the open air and takes its pleasures sadly is in Sherwood Anderson's "Many Marriages." Here a man who is certainly a great potential artist, one who in times gone by has known how to invoke pity and terror, attempts with horrible intensity to stir into

tragedy and endow with poetry the abandonment of his wife by a middle-aged old fool, a business man. He succeeds in producing some of the most ludicrous scenes ever pictured. To the reader there is only a half dotty business man deserting his wife for his stenographer. This might be pathetic if Mr. Anderson had not wished to be heroic. The book is a tract wherein the author tries with dubious results to convince himself that a man should chase after my cutie his fancy lights on, even though his wife commits suicide and his daughter is thrown out alone on the world. Even Sherwood Anderson cannot make such a hero anything but an absurd robot.

Cannot we hope soon to have done with all these apostles of freedom and soul states? We know what most of them mean when they talk so tall. They mean a flat in Macdougall Alley with a "calling" acquaintance on a dozen or so young female apostles of freedom. After we have killed the "Greenwich Village idea," with its Freudians and its "artists" in garrets, perhaps we will begin to take more serious cognizance of literature even though it is produced by a maiden lady living in Kenosha, Wisconsin, who doesn't smoke cigarettes and returns borrowed umbrellas. Her father may (whisper it) belong to the Rotary Club.

Ironie Invitation

By RICHARD KIRK

There's thunder! Loud enough to shake

Dead men awake.

—And pattering rain...

Up, up, sound sleepers. Here's the Spring again!

Address to the Artisans

By JAMES B. CLUNY

Spin your fabric of design
With a ghostly glee
As you fetch your song or line
Sharp from mystery.

Beauty is a goblin joy,
You must be a goblin too;
Earthen fingers will destroy
The fey form and elfin hue.

Seek that music, elfin clear,
The son of Adam scorns:
Bullock ears can never hear
Goblin violins and horns.

Spell your harmonies with glee,
Build your image for delight:
He that planned a homily
Lost the albatross from sight.

Periander, telling where
Echo hid her secret lore,
Lost his images in air,
Cannot find them anymore.

Treasure

By ORRICK JOHNS

What have I counted as life's gold?
A tree, the smell of autumn fire;
Some hours of peace I could not hold;
Love, in a Western shire.

Stars when you lie upon your back;
Hills that hold a water-cup;
All gleaming parallels of track,
All brown roads leading up.

Reviews

THE WASTE LAND

BY T. S. ELIOT

(*Boni & Liveright*, 1922.)

Here, said she,
Is your card, the drowned Phoenician
Sailor.

"THE Waste Land" is, it seems to me, the agonized outcry of a sensitive romanticist drowning in a sea of jazz. When Mr. Burton Rascoe calls it "perhaps the finest poem of this generation," one is compelled to challenge the verdict because comparisons in the arts are unjust in the first place and "The Waste Land" is not as a whole superb. But one would be very foolish indeed who would deny that it contains magnificent elements and supremely beautiful lines.

This medley of catch-phrases, allusions, innuendoes, paraphrase and quotation gives unmistakable evidence of rare poetic genius. One is certain that, read by Mr. Eliot, to whom every allusion is clear, for whom every catch-word has a ghostly portent, for whom every quotation has an emotional and intellectual connotation of intense significance, "The Waste Land" is a great poem. To us who cannot read with Mr. Eliot's spectacles, colored as they are by Mr. Eliot's experience, it must remain a hodge-podge of grandeur and jargon. It cannot, from the standpoint of the average reader or of the average writer of verse, be appraised as a complete success.

Mr. Eliot, an immortal by instinct, finds himself submerged—a "drowned Phoenician Sailor"—in the garish and to him not charming swirl of animalis-

tic, illiterate human life, now seething on both sides of the Atlantic. Caught in this maelstrom, he catches glimpses of the world of drama and romance and stable beauty which he would prefer and which, no question, he has found in books. From that ideal world come floating ghostly cadences, images and reminders. To these straws he clings, as a sort of salvation.

O swallow swallow
Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie
These fragments I have shored against
my ruins

The fragments from the other world which Mr. Eliot clings to in "The Waste Land," like the fragments which he quotes in "The Sacred Wood," are of the very heart of poetry: "Those are pearls that were his eyes," echoes throughout.

Taking the poem as a whole, the average reader will object that many passages, as pure art, are not satisfactory. I venture to repeat that Mr. Eliot's own intellectual or emotional associations give to some of the language used in "The Waste Land" a significance which it does not and cannot have for another individual. The discords, in Mr. Eliot's opinion and in that of certain readers, no doubt, have their place in the pattern, adding a beauty of contrast, heightening the effect of the harmonies. To me the discords seem unsatisfactory discords. "The Waste Land" is a poem containing passages of extreme beauty, but I believe there are few persons who can read it all with sustained delight.

It opens:

April is the cruelest month, breeding
 Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
 Memory and desire, stirring
 Dull roots with spring rain.
 Winter kept us warm, covering
 Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
 A little life with dried tubers.
 Summer surprised us, coming over the
 Starnbergersee

With a shower of rain;

A little farther on Mr. Eliot writes:

What are the roots that clutch, what
 branches grow
 Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
 You cannot say, or guess, for you know
 only
 A heap of broken images, where the
 sun beats,
 And the dead tree gives no shelter, the
 cricket no relief,
 And the dry stone no sound of water.

In "Death by Water" (Part IV of the poem) one finds:

Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight dead,
 Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep
 sea swell
 And the profit and loss.

A current under sea
 Picked his bones in whispers. As he
 rose and fell
 He passed the stages of his age and
 youth
 Entering the whirlpool.

Gentile or Jew
 O you who turn the wheel and look to
 windward,
 Consider Phlebas, who was once hand-
 some and tall as you.

In "A Game of Chess" (Part II) one finds:

"Do
 You know nothing? Do you see nothing?
 Do you remember
 "Nothing?"
 I remember
 Those are pearls that were his eyes.

Many of us have contended for a long time that T. S. Eliot is one of the most exceptional men of letters of his epoch. "The Waste Land" confirms that belief. How much of it or of his previous work is indelible I would not venture to estimate. That that work reveals a genius and a personality extremely rare, I am certain. And that Mr. Eliot, as poet or as critic or as

scholar, eminently deserved such an award as the Dial prize, seems to me incontrovertible.

J. M.

THE GOOSE STEP

BY UPTON SINCLAIR

(*Upton Sinclair, 1923*)

THE "Goose Step" is a fat volume about the American colleges, their presidents, their professors, and the big corporations with their "interlocking directorates," who are represented as governing and controlling them. According to the author it is a sort of family affair. The chapter titles: "The University of the House of Morgan" (thus: Columbia); "The University of Lee Higginson & Company" (thus: Harvard); "The University of the Standard Oil Company" (thus: Chicago); and so on, give the note of the book. Mr. Sinclair names names, gives dates, is singularly and refreshingly undiplomatic in the epithets he applies to some of these estimable gentlemen and their corporations.

He says in effect that education, higher and lower, but in this particular case higher, is censored and rendered aseptic for the college man by the big interests. So that if he absorbs what is doled out to him for four years he will be their man. Professors under their gentle but firm rule are rewarded insofar as their teaching conforms, and unceremoniously dismissed when they fail to please these masters. College professors are thus deprived of the freedom of thought and dignity of purpose; financial remuneration they never did have. The college president is converted into a go-between, a gum shoe artist; colleges into education mills

grinding out a standardized product.

If you doubt Mr. Sinclair's facts then you must believe that he is courting ruin in the shape of two hundred odd damage suits. What he says about President Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia should alone be worth a million. Personally, I believe that ninety-eight per cent of his facts can be substantiated.

What I am unable to share is Mr. Sinclair's indignation. Proof that colleges are training schools for capitalism is like proving that cattle eat grass. If you regard the college as the dwelling place of light, a cloister for free intelligence, or a forum of ideas, "The Goose Step" will be no doubt a high explosive shell. But if you look on colleges as places where rich men send their sons for a little polishing, where social climbers send their sons for a course in manners, and social bootlicking, you will be only amused by this book.

It is not on record that men and women were ever trained for great achievement in any class room whether operated by the U. S. Steel Corporation or the Industrial Workers of the World. Class interests are class interests. Free intelligence is something quite different. I do not believe that if Harvard professors were allowed to preach against electric traction that the University would produce any greater proportion of adult intellects and any smaller proportion of tadpoles. Neither can I conceive how if President Butler were fired from Columbia and Mr. Sinclair put in his place, that university would commence to graduate Neitzches, Emersons, Lincolns, Mark Twains or even George Ades, Nicholai Lenines, and Ring Lardners. Opposition and frown-

ing majority are the air that superior intellect thrives in; hot water is the element of the reformer, general abuse is his need. We do not need great sympathetic universities to foster genius, he does better without them. Abraham Lincoln never went to school yet managed to corral a considerable vocabulary. George Moore's style, G. B. Shaw's refreshing absence of pedagogical categories I am convinced are the fruit of what would seem to a millionaire's son illiteracy. As far as the rest of the ninety-nine it is their ambition to root up more acorns than their neighbors. The present American college is an A No. 1 preparation for this career. To let such an one in on the true state of affairs would be to cramp his style.

I have, it seems, wandered considerably from the subject in hand. Read "The Goose Step" by all means; it is vastly entertaining, especially if you love scandal (as who does not) about the high hats and solemn donkeys who rule the world.

J. W. F.

DRAMATIC LEGENDS

BY PADRAIC COLUM

(Macmillan Company, 1922)

PADRAIC COLUM has tapped sealed casks of the ancients, that the wine of old song and story may run freely and joyously. But in none of these casks has the wine as unusual a flavor as in this latest one. From it is evoked the genius of the Celt that walks abroad crying and singing, dreaming and prophesying. What is this spirit? Sometimes a mournful wood dove resting for a moment on crossed swords; again a pine forest over which white lightning flashes.

Imagination is here in abundance, but with imagination walks the poet's recollection; to the pictures of his fancy cling the soil of his own doorsill,—his village, his people. Could any patriot give a more moving picture of Ireland, past, present and to come than the initial poem in the book? Is it a challenge or an allegory?

Below there are white-faced throngs,
Their march is a tide coming nigher;
Below there are white-faced throngs,
Their faith is a banner flung higher;
White swords they have yet, but red
songs;
Place and lot they have lost—hear you
not?
For a dream you once dreamed and
forgot.

Of the divisions of the book, "Country Songs" in its entirety, is the superior offspring. These songs hold everything,—twilight superstitions, as in "Legend" and "The Sisters' Lullaby," the grinning hardness of life as in "Gilderoy", laments as mournful as water in "The Rune-master" and "Roger Casement", love songs like "The Fair Hills of Eire", whose name is enough to unveil a vision. Colum's metres are extraordinary vehicles, varying with every turn of his thought. What a relief from continuous rhyming are the singing boldness of such lines as:

Can it be that never more
Men will grow on Islands?
Ithaka and Eriskey,
Iceland and Tahiti
Must the engines he has forged
Raven so for spaces,
That the Islands dwindle down,
Dwindle down!
Pots that shelve the tap-root's growth?
Must it be that never more
Men will flower on Islands?
Crete and Corsica, Mitylene
Aran and Iona!

"Creatures and Things Seen" consists of seven or eight indelible, tiny draw-

ings of beasts and birds, done with peculiar significance. "The Monkeys" is the best, fanciful yet satiric:

The apes lilliputian
With faces the size of
A pair of pennies,
And voices as low as
The flow of my blood.

and "The Vultures",—as unrelenting as some drawings of Blake

Impure though they may plunge
Into the morning's springs
And spirit-dulled, though they
Command the heaven's heights.

"Reminiscences" evokes the heart of an Irish village brimful of characters. Picture after picture comes before us,—the old dame in the store, the pugilist, the honey seller, the gypsy, Nell the Rambler. Then the memories turn to runes, full of the windy breath of adventure but Erin to the core:—

Pieces of amber I brought you big as a
bowman's thumbs,
I bring you; you bring me again, the love
the triumph, the strife!

The last section of the book is with the exception of "Swift's Pastoral," the least appealing. The myths are shadowy, the voices faint and far away, there is lacking the sudden appeal of new themes. In "The Miracle of the Corn," is summed the impression of the book:—

An air comes from it all—a smell of
growing
Green, growing corn, a field that smelled
sweet, sweet....
And whispered lovingly, I'm greatly
changed
And often I am strange even to myself

In this last phrase is curled like an elf in a nut shell, the eerie quality of this Irish poet.

LAURA BENET.

VINCENT STARRETT

Ebony Flame, by Vincent Starrett, Chicago, Covici-McGee, 1922.

Banners in the Dawn, Sixty-Four Sonnets by Vincent Starrett, Chicago, Walter M. Hill, 1923.

MR. STARRETT'S passion for books, of which he is an inveterate collector, has tinged many of the poems in these volumes. There are several dozen on more or less bookly themes, and one cannot help wishing as one reads them that Mr. Starrett would write more poems like "Villon Strolls at Midnight" and "Crescent Moon" and fewer sonnets to D'Artagnan and to Joseph ("After Reading Charles Wells's *Joseph and His Brethren*"). Not that these literary poems are inferior—many of them are excellent—but that one reads literary poems, however good, with a qualified pleasure.

It would be dishonest in praising Mr. Starrett's good poems not to take exception to his bad ones. That some of these verses are ill-advised, there can be little question. Especially among the poems in more jovial vein are some which seem either altogether too superficial or simply poor. There are several more serious poems, too, which for one reason or another fall flat. But, admitting that all in these books is not gold, one can proceed more easily to a fair appraisal of the really fine poems and passages.

In his best work Mr. Starrett writes with an admirable sustained technique, soothing the ear with distinguished diction and moulding his cadences with exquisite attention. He is kin to those artisans in beautiful language who flourished in the Nineties and for whom it is evident he has a strong sentiment of comradeship. At his best Mr. Starrett is a very good poet indeed. He

would produce more of his best, however, one believes, if he would escape from his pre-occupation with literature and a too-often selfconscious penmanship.

The poems in, "Ebony Flame" and "Banners in the Dawn" can be divided broadly into serious creative poems, literary poems and light verse. A merger of the literary touch and the good-humored vein (such as Praed and his peers used to rare advantage in the last century) is found in "Scotland Yard":

I see a building ominous and gray
With cat-eyed windows looking on the
night,
Across whose green and scrutinizing sight
Fantastic shadows race in frantic play.
Dim scoundrels unfamiliar with the day
Slip through the dark in animated flight,
Pursued by men invincibly polite
Who puff at pipes and haven't much to
say.
Inside, the click of secret panels; stairs
That climb in dizzy flight to sudden
nooks,
And noiseless doors that open unawares
Revealing silent men with gravid looks—
I learned all this at night, in rocking
chairs,
Surrounded by a multitude of books!

Mr. Starrett has in both these books a number of poems and passages in the gay manner which are extremely pleasant. Kin in one direction to the men of the Nineties, he is kin in another to Dobson, Thackeray, Lang, Praed, Stevenson and the other merry bards. And, like those poets, he is able to blend quaint conceit and good humor, on occasion, into verses which leap out of the category of charming *vers-de-société* into that of exhilarating poetry. I should like to quote here "Crescent Moon," if it had not already appeared in *The Double Dealer*.

As an example of Mr. Starrett's more serious work. I quote "Villon Strolls at Midnight." It is doubtful, in my mind, whether he has surpassed it:

"There is an eerie music, Tabary,
In the malevolence of the wind tonight:
Think you the spirits of the damned make
flight
O' midnights? Gad, a wench I used to
see
Heard all the ghosts of history ride past
Her window on a shieking gale like this...
Look! Where the moonlight and the shad-
ows kiss!
Saw you aught move?... Poor jade, she
died unmassed.

"See where the gibbet riseth, gaunt and
slim...
(Curse me! The wind hath thrust my en-
trails through.)
It beareth fruit tonight—Not me, nor
you!—
Hark to the clatter of the bones of him.
They rattle like—Ah, do you catch your
breath?
Like castanets clapped in the hands of
Death!"

One wishes Mr. Starrett would write more poems like that.

Both "Ebony Flame" and "Banners in the Dawn" are attractive examples of bookmaking. Both are limited editions and both are going to be scarce, valuable and sought-after by collectors. It is to be hoped they will be reissued so there will be enough copies to go round among readers of poetry who do not collect.

J. W.

CAROLINA CHANSONS

Legends of the Low Country

BY DU BOSE HEYWARD AND HERVEY ALLEN

(Macmillan, 1922)

WHETHER the approach to a literature or the return to a literature (in the case of a people which has had and lost one) is to be accomplished through localization is not established. The "feel of the soil" may be necessary to the artist, but that he should feel that soil as being the soil of Boone County, is debatable. There is no question that Mr. Sandburg, for instance,

writes better when he is talking of cool tombs than when he is eulogizing in particular terminology the "hog butcher of the world." Whitman arrived at real poetry only when he avoided his inventories of United States resources and became lyrical over eternal substances or moods which would be as familiar to a Chinaman as to an American democrat. The best poetry in English is not noticeable for its geography.

I bring up this point in connection with "Carolina Chansons" not because I wish to attempt to belittle the poetic talent of the authors, but because they and a group of other writers in the South have championed this fallacy of localization. They have advanced the theory that, if the South is to develop a distinctive literature, it must exploit southern subjects, southern scenes and southern sentiments. I venture to assert that this has been largely the obstacle in the way of production of literature in the South for two generations. The southern writer has been too engrossed in his immediate tangible surroundings. There is a great difference between the Platonic idea of soil (with which the artist is primarily concerned) and the perception of the soil-of-Boone-county.

This fallacy can cause a devil-of-a-lot of mischief.

The art of poetry is a matter of sound, of imagery, of intellectual concept, of form, and the exhortation to exploit particular subject matter can for many an incipient poet befog the issue. The poet is supposed to fabricate beauty in word and thought. That is his business. He is not an archivist, though his poems may become archives. A Shrop-

shire lad may weave some Shropshire into his art, but it is incidental. Shropshire is one of a multitude of images. So is Boone county.

These words are penned in reply to a manifesto by the authors of "Carolina Chansons" which I remember to have read, or which I think I have read. As to "Carolina Chansons" I have no hesitancy in admitting there are good things in it, and that both Mr. Heyward and Mr. Allen reveal much talent. This talent in the case of both writers is, I believe, descriptive. The narratives lack

the distinction of the pictures, which often are excellent poetry.

I am sure that "Carolina Chansons," as a volume of poems, is marred by its intensely local aroma. As a memorial to the authors' city and state, that low country with its rare traditions, the book is pleasant reading and sometimes charming. And in it are a few poems and a number of passages which show that Mr. Heyward and Mr. Allen can, when they will, produce verse beautiful in itself.

J. W.

Tzu Kung Makes an Error

By PAUL ELDRIDGE

I believed at first
It was the full moon
That followed me
As I crossed the long bridge
That spans the Yellow River.

And I thought:
"The moon is my shadow."

Later I noticed
That it was but a cloud
Chased by the wind.

And I thought:
"I am the shadow of a cloud."

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